

U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DEA, ATF, PRPD OPERATION RESULTS IN NINETEEN ARRESTS FOR DISTRIBUTION
OF DRUGS NEAR A PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT**

San Juan, Puerto Rico-H.S. GARCIA, The United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, JEROME M. HARRIS, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Caribbean Division, MARCIAL ORLANDO FELIX, Resident Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), HERMAN WIRSHING, U.S. Marshal, U.S. Marshals Service, JOSE LOZADA, the Director of the Puerto Rico Special Investigations Bureau (NIE), and PEDRO TOLEDO, Superintendent, Puerto Rico Police Department (PRPD), announced the issuance of nineteen (19) arrest warrants against individuals that were part of a drug trafficking organization. Sixteen (16) of nineteen (19) have been arrested. There arrest warrants are the result of a Federal Grand Jury indictment issued in the District of Puerto Rico on May 10, 2006, charging the individuals with violations of the Federal Controlled Substances Act, Title 21, United States Code, Section(s) 841, 846 & 860, (Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute, and Distribution of Controlled Substances Near a School or Public Housing Project.)

The individuals arrested were: **JOSE JOEL JIMENEZ-RAMOS**, aka “Joel”, aka “Mono”, **ANTONIO CRUZ-ESTELA**, aka “Anthony”, **LUIS A. CRUZ-LOPEZ**, **CARLOS J. TIRADO-CORREA**, aka “Carli”, **FELIX ROSA-FREYTES**, aka “Vitito”, **KATHERINE NEGRON-RAMOS**, aka “Katiria”, **LEONARDO COLON-RODRIGUEZ**, aka “Leo”, **REYNALDO RIOS-RODRIGUEZ**, aka “Garra”, **YAHAIRA RIOS-RUIZ**, **ISRAEL RODRIGUEZ-VELAZQUEZ**, aka “Grillo”, **ANDY RIVERA-GONZALEZ**, **JOSE L. SANTANA-PARRILLA**, aka “Wiwi”, **LUIS A. REYES-RODRIGUEZ**, aka “Monki”, **EDWIN GABRIEL VELEZ-COLLAZO**, aka “Gaby”, **IRMA E. PASTRANA-BENITEZ**, **YAMILIS RIOS-RUIZ**, aka “Zori”, **GABRIEL BENTANCOURT**, aka “Gaby Gordo”, **OLBAP LOPEZ-FELIX**, **ZORAIDA GOMEZ-PABON**.

The investigation targeted a criminal organization engaging in the sale and distribution of drugs. The indictment alleges that the individuals charged in this indictment purchased narcotics in Puerto Rico, including cocaine, crack, heroin and marijuana, and distributed those narcotics within Puerto Rico, including at a drug point (“punto”) located in the Juan Jiménez García Public Housing Project in Caguas. From June 2001 until the date of the indictment, the defendants did assist the operation of the twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, drug point at the above mentioned public housing by different means, including by possessing with the intent to distribute controlled substances and by distributing controlled substances which were sold to customers in the Jiménez public Housing Project for substantial financial gain.

Penalties for the narcotics offenses alleged in the indictment range from ten (10) years to life imprisonment and fines of up to four million dollars (\$4,000,000.00). The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt.

The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial and the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This indictment is the result of a joint investigation conducted by agents of the Federal Drug

Enforcement Administration (DEA), Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the U.S. Marshals, the Puerto Rico Police Department, the Puerto Rico Department of Justice Negociado Investigaciones Especiales, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant US Attorney Nathan Schulte.